

# ULYANA SERGEENKO

## Haute Couture Fall-Winter 21/22

The Ulyana Sergeenko Fall-Winter 2021/2022 Haute Couture collection is the first to be presented by the house as a correspondent member of the Fédération de la Haute Couture et de la Mode. The collection was shown as a film, directed by the bewitching Renata Litvinova, with Natalia Vodianova starring in the leading role.

The scene is set under the open sky, in a field adjacent to an old estate. The heroine enters a parallel reality, appearing in several forms, reflective of her multifaceted inner world: sometimes she is vulnerable and gentle, and sometimes - mighty and determined.

Throughout the creative process, Renata drew her inspiration from Andrei Tarkovsky's strong female characters as well as René Magritte's surrealist pieces. Thus, the dark balloons floating above the field were a reference to the painter's "The Voice of Space". In the words of the director, these eerie, anxious spheres soaring in the twilight skies peculiarly highlight Natalia's beauty and fragility. The mysterious atmosphere and bizarre object combinations perfectly encapsulate the intentions of the painter: "One cannot speak about mystery; one must be seized by it."

The Fall-Winter 2021/2022 Haute Couture collection was inspired by the natural beauty and the rich culture of Karelia - a land of bottomless lakes and dense woods, strewn with myths and legends. The constrained colour palette is reflective of the hues seen in the Russian North. The cool blue skies, the gray layered marble, the pale coral cloudberry and the silver aspen church domes, which miraculously appear to change colour under different lighting. The dark, intense tones remind one of the forest depths. Clean silhouettes with sharp angles, achieved through corseting, are a reference to the streamlined architecture of ancient wood constructions. Transparent, flowing dresses with elaborate embroidery neighbour more exaggerated garments with enlarged shoulders, rigid leather corsets and thick fabrics.

This season, the fashion house continued to incorporate elements of traditional craftsmanship and assimilated new techniques into the atelier - novel forms of embroidery, lacemaking and laser cutting. Jewelers from the "Rostovskaya Finift" factory have created brooch sets in the forms of mythical characters for the collection. Multicoloured details decorating several pieces were carved out at the Maltsov Crystal Factory in Gus-Khrustalny. Yelets lace components, painstakingly hand woven over the course of 4 months by the "Kruzhevnoi Krai" atelier, feature upon corsets and evening dress basques.

Floral designs are entirely absent in the Fall-Winter 2021/2022 Haute Couture collection, replaced with more geometrical patterns. Much was based around the shape of a

“Iemekh”, a scale-like wooden shingle covering the church domes of the “Kizhi Pogost” – an architectural ensemble on the Kizhi island. Moreover, ancient drawings of solar symbols, normally placed on the outside of a house to protect against evil spirits, were reinterpreted by the design bureau. References to these elements can be found in lapels, streaming rows of fringe upon a corset or a dress, a unique technique of leather perforation, in the pared back geometry of Yelets lace and in the patterns of knitted pieces. One can also discover pagan myth characters – birds, horses and wolves, traditionally seen in Zaonezh and Pudozh embroidery – among the details of the collection. The image of the bird represents happiness in Slavic cultures, and the horse symbolises a protector. These creatures come alive atop jackets, dresses, in the intricate webs of Yelets lace and in appliques.

The looks within the new collection are completed by a range of accessories: jewellery, evening bags, chatelaine belts, balaclavas, gloves, shoes and stocking-boots with garter belts. Necklaces are embellished with keys and drop pendants. Made of white and yellow gold, the pieces are encrusted with coloured semi precious stones. The balaclavas are laboriously produced by hand using several knitting techniques and beaded with river pearls and crystals. The outerwear is fastened using wide leather belts with keyholder-chatelaines with centerpieces shaped as a wolf head.

Gartered stocking-boots and long satin gloves with Gus Crystal details add a touch of femininity to the stronger, darker looks. Evening dresses are paired with silk-satin duchesse high-heeled pumps.

Ulyana Sergeenko

Film: Renata Litvinova

Starring: Natalia Vodianova

Music: J. J. Johanson

Photography: Nick Sushkevich, Timofey Kolesnikov, Aset Geroeva

MUAH: Konstantin Kochegov, Eugenia Lenz

